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# DEPARTMENT OF VISITING NURSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE



## NURSING FOR CORPORATIONS \*

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Of the many fields of usefulness, along the lines of her profession, into which the graduate nurse of to-day has entered, one of the most alluring and important is the work of the factory nurse. Ten years ago, or even a shorter space of time, skilled care for the employees had not been even considered, much less provided for, by any of the manufacturing companies of our country, but to-day there are very few of the factories in the larger cities which have not included the trained nurse in its corps of workers and consider her a most valuable asset. In some cities, one of the regular visiting nurses is given charge of the factory work, the company being responsible to the association for her salary, and her time being entirely at its disposal; the association on the other hand, seeing to it that a capable, and entirely satisfactory woman is provided. Such an arrangement exists in Cleveland between the Visiting Nurse Association and one of the large hardware companies in that city. This, to my mind, is the ideal manner of conducting the first aid and welfare work, as it not only enlarges the scope of the visiting work, but it also brings the corporations into a more intimate relationship, and into closer touch with the various philanthropic organizations of the city—and such contact cannot fail to be of the greatest benefit to each. It also relieves the corporations of the responsibility of a work the various details of which they are not in a position to intelligently comprehend. The Western Electric Company of Chicago, which employs from 3000 to 4000 men, have built a most completely equipped hospital, where any man injured while in its employ can be given not only first aid, but the best of medical, surgical, and nursing care until he is able to resume work again. The Cash Register Co. at Dayton, O., also has some such provisions for the care of its employees.

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\* Read before the Graduate Nurses' Association, Columbus, Ohio, April 6, 1910.

This work was undertaken in Columbus about two years ago, entirely as an experiment, by one of the largest manufacturing companies, and I feel perfectly safe in saying that the results of the experiment have far exceeded all expectations—the work, even in so short a time, has proven itself to be not only invaluable, but absolutely indispensable, to the company under whose direction it was established. With this company the welfare work is an important feature; and this, combined with the dispensary and “first aid” work, is at this time under the direction and supervision of a resident physician, and a nurse, whom you all know as a woman well fitted for the position she occupies,—a position, which you will appreciate requires not only a well-equipped but a resourceful and tactful woman.

You think this nurse has little to do? Why she is the busiest woman in our profession. Listen to some of the details: she has charge of the factory dispensary and general supervision of hygienic conditions in all the buildings. Each department foreman sends the name and address of an absent employee and she visits the home, making a report by telephone as to the conditions found there: this is done with office employees also, on the same basis as with the factory employees. Full and comprehensive records are kept of each person visited in the homes, these records embracing a detailed account of the various members of the family, general home conditions, etc. Often the most delicate adjustment between physician, family, and neighbors depends upon her discretion; and right here is where the nurse is most valuable, and almost without an exception, most appreciated, and most welcome.

In the pocket of the average factory man, after the rent, grocery, and gas bills have been paid, there is little or no money for extra help for the tired mother and wife when illness comes. The nurse entering this home once or twice a day, where a little child lies ill with pneumonia or some such dread disease, is of inestimable comfort and help to the little mother there, sharing with her the responsibility of the care of the child, by giving much needed advice and cheering her in numberless ways. In cases in which more care is needed than the nurse has time to give, the visiting nurse becomes useful.

Often in her visits to the homes the nurse discovers conditions existing which need consideration and adjustment; perhaps some member of the family may be the victim of a disease hitherto unsuspected, which the experienced eye of the nurse quickly discerns, and medical aid is advised and even provided in many cases; or a baby, actually suffering from the lack of proper and sufficient nourishment, is directed along the path to “peace and plenty” under the careful and intelligent guidance of the nurse.

The lessons in ordinary and surgical cleanliness, the importance of care, and the danger in the neglect of the slight injuries as well as in the more serious ones, which in his dispensary experience is indelibly stamped upon the mind of the factory man, are lessons which, if he heeds, will save him not only dollars and cents, but suffering and in many cases, his life.

While this work, from the viewpoint of the employer, is of financial value, I know whereof I speak when I say that it is in a larger sense an indication of the deep personal interest taken in the work and life of the man at the bench, in the foundry, and in the office; and this same man is beginning to appreciate more and more the fact that somebody knows and cares when he is absent from work, and cares enough to find out why, and to give both sympathy and aid when needed.

And now just a glance at the amount and nature of the work done in the dispensary at the Jeffrey Manufacturing Co., for which it is well equipped. During the month of March "first aid" was given 318 patients, a daily average of about 15 original cases: There were 414 re-dressings made during the month, a daily average of 20; 327 medical cases were given attention, a daily average of 16, making a total daily average of 51 cases, and a total for the month of over 1000 cases in the dispensary. Besides these, there will be at least four or five calls for the nurse to make daily, in as many parts of the city, these calls not being included in the general average.

As to the nature of the original injuries, most of these can be classed under some one of the following heads: injuries to the eye, by flying bits of steel, emery, &c.; cuts about the face and head, or on the hands; bruises, of different parts of the body; and burns, which are, perhaps, the most troublesome of all, as they are usually received from molten iron dropping inside the shoe, and burning its way well into the tissues of the foot before the shoe can be removed. These burns require a long time before the healing process is complete and they are particularly difficult to protect against infection owing to the locality of the burn and to the fact that the patient is anxious to continue his work.

There are, also, crushed fingers and toes, strained tendons, sprained ankles, and occasionally fractured and even broken bones. In accidents of a serious nature the consulting surgeon, employed by the company, is called and the patient removed either to his home or to one of the hospitals as the case may require. Since the establishment of this work the percentage of infections following injuries is practically nil.

In reviewing the work of the two years with a member of this company this statement was made: "We can conservatively say that the

results of our experiment have far exceeded all our expectations; the work is of great value, both to the company and to its men, it has opened up undreamed of avenues for usefulness and we feel that we could not operate our factory satisfactorily without our first aid and welfare work.

NOTE.—It has been a matter of pride with the JOURNAL's management, from its beginning, to offer to its readers original reading matter, prepared exclusively for its pages. There appeared in this department last month a short article which we have since seen in three other magazines. The writer explains that she did not intend her contribution as an article, but as a report for the department of news items. As it was prepared in literary form and under a title, this was not clear to us when we received it, and we are sorry it was misplaced.

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THE PROBLEM OF THE HOUSE MOSQUITO.—In New Jersey the work done in the salt marshes since 1904 has practically eliminated the migratory species of mosquito, says Smith (*Bull. 216, New Jersey Agricultural Exper. Station*, November, 1908), but the local breeding house mosquito still annoys to a greater or less extent, depending on favorable conditions of season and moisture. It breeds in one or two weeks in every conceivable sort of place where there is even the smallest quantity of stagnant water, and its extinction depends on constant vigilance in destroying its breeding-places. The impregnated female hibernates in cellars, garrets, cold rooms, dark and sheltered places, hollow trees, under loose bark, and even in burrows or holes in the ground. In the spring the eggs are laid on the surface of the water and soon hatch. In cellars and similar inclosed places they may be killed by fumigation with phenol and camphor or by burning stramonium. All cisterns, rain-barrels, etc., should be kept covered and all pools drained and filled, or covered with oil. Even sewer catch-basins afford breeding-places for them and these should be looked after. In New Jersey, water in which larvæ breed is declared by statute to be a nuisance; local boards of health are given power to abate it and their orders may be enforced against municipalities as well as individuals.—*Journal of the American Medical Association*.